

An outline map of the state of Michigan, showing the Upper and Lower Peninsulas and the surrounding Great Lakes. The map is positioned on the left side of the page, with the title text to its right.

# MICHIGAN EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Winter 2005

Scoring Guide

ELA Part 1 Grade 7

**WRITING FROM KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE**

**WRITE ABOUT THE THEME:**

**DEVELOPING STRENGTHS AND TALENTS**

Everyone has unique strengths and talents. Some people are very good at sports or playing a musical instrument. Some people excel at making others feel good about themselves. Write about developing strengths and talents.

Do **ONLY ONE** of the following:

tell about how you have developed a strength or talent of your own

**OR**

describe a strength or talent that you have encouraged in someone else

**OR**

explain how someone used his or her strength or talent in a positive way

**OR**

persuade a friend or family member of the importance of developing his or her talent

**OR**

write about the theme in your own way.

You may use examples from real life, from what you read or watch, or from your imagination.

Your audience will be interested adults.

Pages 5–8 in this test booklet may be used for writing down ideas, organizing your thoughts, or writing a rough draft. Use the checklists on page 9 to help you improve your writing. Page 10 contains the scorepoint descriptions used by readers to score your writing.

The final copy of your response must be written in the lined spaces starting on page 1 of your **Answer Folder**. Only the writing in your **Answer Folder** will be scored. No additional sheets may be used. Nothing written on the prewriting and rough draft pages will be scored.

a talent that I have is that I can set up a tent faster than anyone else by myself. My friends can set up a tent twice as much time as I can set a tent up. I'm also fast at taking down tents and rolling them up.

**Score Point: 1**

This response attempts to explain the writer's ability to set up and take down a tent. Further development beyond this information would be needed for a higher score.

Write your final response here.

There was a fire at the end of my street. So the fire fiterS got dressed and came us fast as they could. They used there strength to hold the hose and talent to put out the fire. They saved all exept one a mouse. They saved 2 cats 1 dog 5 people and that is a hero.

**Score Point: 1**

This response attempts to explain an instance when firefighters used their strength and talent to put out a fire. However, the content is not developed. There is not much offered beyond putting out the fire and saving some animals and people, and it is these ideas that are not developed with details.

Write your final response here.

I do not really know what  
it means, but I think  
it would be like when you get  
really good at something like a  
sporting event. I think that  
strengths are something that you  
are naturally good at like  
spelling. My imaginary friend Fred  
has a strength and it is  
pool. We play every morning, and  
after a while I started noticing  
that I was developing the  
same strength as he had.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

This Article I wrote about  
is what I think developing  
strengths and talents ~~mean~~ means, and  
also what it is.

**Score Point: 1**

This response contains some general and vague ideas concerning the theme of “developing strengths and talents”. It provides a random list of activities that are neither developed nor connected, leaving the response unclear.

Write your final response here.

During the past years I have developed an important strength to me. It is that I'm good at sports. Every year I play sports, and sometimes I even try something new. This year I did track for the first time, and I learned that I can run pretty fast, and I can do hurdles very well. I also do volleyball and traveling volleyball and this year I learned how to step up my game. This year I was an outside hitter. I can even jump higher, because I do sky-king, which makes my calves stronger. I plan to get better on my jump shot this summer, for traveling basketball. I feel that by doing sports, I've gotten tougher and stronger. In conclusion, those are some of my strengths, or things I'm good at.

**Score Point: 2**

This response attempts to focus on how sports are the writer's talent. It attempts to explain something about each sport (I learned that I can run pretty fast; I learned how to step up my game; I plan to get better on my jump shot this summer), but it does not move beyond simply listing these ideas with no development.

Write your final response here.

My favorite thing to do is skateboard. I like to get people into it, and teach them new things. One summer everyone was in to skateboarding and they all used to come over to my house and skateboard on my half pipe, but a lot of people gave up because they think it's too hard or they don't want to brake their ankle or something. All my friends skateboard and if they don't then I get them all into it. I think taking someone to a skate park is the best way to get someone into skateboarding. I have been successful doing this.

**Score Point: 2**

This response attempts to focus on how skateboarding, and getting others involved, is the writer's talent. There is an attempt to explain some events one summer, but there is only minimal detail. Overall, this response is underdeveloped.



Write your final response here.

Strengths and Talents can only be of good use, unless you don't even use them. If you don't use your talent, you won't be helping anybody, and you even possibly be hurting someone.

For instance, if your talent was in developing new scientific ideas, you could possibly know how to make cures for deadly diseases. If you did this, you could save millions of lives over the years, but if you didn't use your talent, these people would die. Another thing that could happen is if your cure keeps a certain person alive, that person may have a talent that could affect the world in a big way. So it could become a chain reaction from one talent to the next.

Now what if you didn't know what to use your talent for. What would you do to discover and develop it. Something you could do is that if you knew someone who had a talent like yours, you could look to them for ideas on what to do.

Concluding all of this, your talents should be a very important thing to you. You should also use any method possible to the best of your abilities, because they not only affect you, but everyone and everything around you.

Score Point: 2

This response attempts to focus on the importance of using talents. The content includes two extended examples: developing cures for diseases that result in a chain reaction affecting the whole world, and the idea of getting others' opinions on your possible talents. However, the examples given seem artificial, and the absence of any real expansion of these examples by way of more details leaves the response underdeveloped as a whole, holding the score to a high "2".

Write your final response here.

I have developed a strength in Skiing. My mom and dad (for the first time!) took me skiing at an amazing ski resort called Crystal Mountain which I now know like my own back yard. The first time I went skiing I went down a slope called "Main Street." Now Main Street is no bunny slope but I kept trying. Next I went down a hill called "Pop's Peak" surrounded by a deep gorge and lots of trees. As I went down my skis started to slip and I tumbled off the slope and right into a tree. I wasn't ready to throw away all the work I had taken to develop the skill so I went back to smaller hills. I went to Crystal almost every weekend to perfect my skiing talents. I taught myself how to go down moguls, through half pipes, and off jumps. I soon had conquered every hill but one called "nose dive" a suicide run. "Nose dive" is a straight down hill that has lots of ice and moguls, not very friendly. Every winter I go and develop my newfound skiing talent.

Score Point: 3

This response remains somewhat focused on developing strength in skiing. Although the content discusses the repeated attempts to ski various slopes, particularly Pop's Peak, limited details create only partially successful examples. This lack of detail, along with ineffective transitions between ideas, provides a limited organizational structure and keeps the response at a low "3".

Write your final response here.

When I was little, about 5, my dad taught me how to play baseball. He was great at teaching me how to hit, catch, and even run the bases properly. In my first year of baseball (tee-ball) I was struggling, but my dad told me to stick with it so I did. We did a lot more practicing and I became a moderate player (atleast for a six year old.) I was so thrilled when I finally hit the ball for the first time in a game. It was off a batting tee, but it made me feel great!

It was in the year 1998 when I turned seven and had to play against 8, 9, and 10 year olds. This was one of my worst years because I wasn't use to people pitching to me. I was watching the ball go by. "Your Out!" yelled the umpire! This is because I haven't hit the ball all year and I would always get struck-out. I also did horrible at fielding to because I didn't expect people to hit it out to left field. The ball just flew way to fast.

Two years later is where my career took a bang! I was beginning to pitch when I remembered what my dad had said, "Never give up!" Surprisingly that season I struck-out alot of people from my pitching and I was the one slapping the ball into left field. My grandfather died one week before the championship. I couldn't get over the death the day of the game and I ended up doing horrible. Near the end of the game I knew that my grandpa was proud of me up in heaven. That is when

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

I came out of my slump and started to do wonderful. We didn't win the championship, but I was proud of my team anyways.

Now I am doing exceptionally well in my 8<sup>th</sup> year in baseball. I haven't made the allstars, but I am still trying. If it wasn't for my dad I would have never recieved the talent of baseball. It was a long struggle, but it was worth it.

**Score Point: 3**

While this response is somewhat clear and focused on the writer's development in baseball, it is too general and simplistic. It offers an organizational structure in which the writer learns the game of baseball (teaching me how to hit, catch, and even run the bases properly), including some detail for each event, but the overall development remains limited.

Write your final response here.

It was my dream to become a member of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade cheerleading squad, but I knew in order to fulfill this dream I would have to work hard. This was something I was not just going to throw out there and hope for the best, this was something I was determined to accomplish.

In January 2003, I began to take gymnastics. This was a skill that would better my chances on making the team. (Many people don't have the skill to tumble, so if I got it, it would help with try-outs.) My teacher's name was K. She was a very good teacher! She worked with me every week until I reached my goal, completing a round-off, back-hand-spring.

NOW, it was about the middle of spring, and try-outs grew closer. I practiced every day it was nice outside. But, I didn't only practice the things I was good at, instead I practiced everything. This helped me improve my cheers, jumps, heel stretches, and tumbling.

As the day of try-outs grew even closer, I became more and more nervous. But I knew that if I kept working, and stayed

confident, I would make it!

When the day of try-outs came, it looked like all my hard work had payed off. I did great when I tried out, and that was all because of my practicing. After everyone (58 girls) tried out, they announced who made it... and I was one!

I guess if you really want something, all you have to do is work for it. I also learned one very important lesson from this experience, nothing is impossible!

**Score Point: 3**

This response remains somewhat clear and focused on the writer's dream of becoming a member of the cheerleading squad. Although the content offers a number of ideas (taking gymnastics to gain necessary skills; practicing to improve cheers, jumps, stretches and tumbling; ultimately making the squad), they are only partially developed. The response has a functional organizational structure with a progression of events. More development of details would be needed to move this response to a score point of "4".

Write your final response here.

### Developing My Talent of Talking to People

One of my **strengths** is talking to people and informing them of things they need to know about my school.

I developed this talent last summer when our school tried to get a bond for some money to repair our schools and get them up to date. I went out into about fifteen neighborhoods with my twin sister and two of my friends,

We formed two groups so we could go to more houses. Each group took a stack of pamphlets and some papers to hand out. We met some really nice people who were interested in what we had to say. We were all nervous at first, but the results that we got from people, such as their interest in the information that we were giving them, or the credit they gave us for our dedication during the summer, helped a lot. Now, it is much easier for me to talk to people, and I enjoy it very much.

In fact, just in the last couple of days, my sister and I went out in a handful of neighborhoods to pass out some more information about our school. It was easier this time because we were more

experienced in doing it.

It is very rewarding to see how the people of our community respond to us. People find out more about our school, and it all comes back to us kids who benefit from what we're educating the residents of the Community about. Therefore, I came across one of my best talents, imparting people of things that are going on at \_\_\_\_\_ by trying it with some friends and doing it over and over again until I was used to it. Now, I hope that the people of my community know at least a little more about my school.

## Score Point: 4

This response is generally focused on the writer's development in talking to people. It progresses through the task of informing the community about a school bond and the positive responses she received. While remaining somewhat flat, the use of relevant examples (community interest in the information; the credit people gave her for her dedication) establishes a more developed piece overall.



Write your final response here.

Have you ever wondered how some of the Olympic gymnasts get all of their talent? Talent for gymnastics does not just come to you. You have to work hard to be good at it. I used to be a gymnast and I can tell you how I have developed my gymnastics talent right from the beginning.

First, I started doing gymnastics when I was almost five years old. I went to practices at the YMCA in MT. I always looked forward to going even though it was not a very big part of my life. At the YMCA I learned the basic skills like; forward and backward rolls, cartwheels, and handstands. I loved doing gymnastics and I knew I could get good at it.

After a few years my friend told me about a place I could go that is more serious about gymnastics. This place was called Gymnastiks Unlimited. I started in level one in what they called rec classes. From there I moved up to level three and then five. I knew I was moving up quickly.

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

Later I was invited to be on the Explorer's team which involves learning routines and going to meets. The meets were just for fun. The Explorer's team was level three. About a year later I moved up to Pre-team which is similar to the Explorer's team but a higher level. I stayed in Pre-team for two years and advanced my skills a lot. Gymnastics was now a huge part of my life and I would practice many times a week.

The next year I moved to a new gym called Gymnastics and Dance. I was now competing against other gymnasts and recieved scores and metals. That same year I became seventh in the state of Michigan in my age division for level five. I was very proud of myself and I knew I was a pretty good gymnast. That summer I worked on level six routines. I also moved to a different city that summer and decided to stop doing gymnastics.

Even though I am not doing gymnastics anymore I still use my talent and strength in other things. Being an Olympic gymnast is very hard work

and a lot of time. Now you may  
~~know~~ know how some of these hard-  
working gymnasts start their gymnastics  
career.

**Score Point: 4**

This response focuses on how the writer developed her talent in gymnastics. The organizational structure transitions between different skill levels (from basic skills to learning routines to state competition), and offers more detail about what is involved at the higher levels. Each idea includes details needed for development. The writer's command of language allows for a consistent tone and creates a generally clear and focused response.

Write your final response here.

B B is a bright and intelligent 13 year old. She got straight A report cards, and was on the honor roll the entire year. But what she didn't know was that she has an incredible talent that will be of some help later on, if she figures it out. Here's her story.

It was a regular old boring Monday. She got up, got ready, ate, and got on the bus. She sat down next to her best friend R, a brown hair brown eyes straight B student. R had a hand full of pink and blue flyers. B was curious but didn't bother to ask. "I can see you're looking at the flyers, want one?" R questioned. "Well what are they for, that's all I want to know" B replied. "They're for this great performance school. They have dance, singing, theater, the whole nine yards. My sister, S, goes to the school and the number of students is low so they're having try-outs at the civic center. S wants me to pass out as many flyers as possible" R blurted "want

one?" The bus stopped at school.

B took a Flyer just so R would be quiet about it.

The whole day B kept thinking about the Flyer building from her pocket. When she got home she posted it on the bulletin board so her parents would see.

She went in her room, cranked up the music and started singing and dancing in front of her mirror. To her surprise she was actually quit good.

That night at dinner the performance school took up the whole conversation. But they weren't talking about how good B was, but how expensive it was and if she was going to try out she would need the scholarship.

She practiced every waking hour she had. The big day had come, she was pumped up and nervous. She was back stage rehearsing when one of the schools teachers came up to her and said she had no chance. But to her surprise

she did awesome!

Weeks later a letter came for  
B from the school. She opened  
it and screamed. It said  
"Congratulations! You made it, and you  
will receive full scholarship."

The End.

**Score Point: 4**

This response explains how a talent earned the writer a scholarship. The content details the desire of the writer to attend a performance school, her understanding of the need to win a scholarship, and her finally achieving her goal. The writer's command of language is generally coherent. Additional engaging and developed details would be needed to move this response to a higher score.

Write your final response here.

I have always been jealous of my older brother and younger sister because of their athletic talents. My brother is great at almost every sport: football, soccer, basketball, golf, and baseball. My sister is good at track, soccer, and gymnastics. I'm not good at any sport. But then I finally realized that there was something that I was good at, better than my siblings, even I'm a pretty good singer. Ever since I could talk, I would sing. My uncle would say I was destined to be a performer. But there's one little problem. I'm a really shy person, so when I'm around anyone besides my family and close friends, I open my mouth and nothing comes out. In 2003, I tried out for "Annie" at the community theater. At home, I would practice and practice the song I would have to sing, and it sounded great. But when I tried out, well, things didn't go as planned. I didn't make the play. This year, I auditioned for "South Pacific." I sang so softly that I had to try out again! Thankfully, I made the chorus for that musical. I'm in choir at school, and we had auditions for

solos and a singing quiz on the same day. I would have never in a million years have wanted to sing alone in front of critical peers or in front of their parents, so I didn't try out. My singing quiz was so excellent that my teacher asked if she could consider me for a solo. Of course, I didn't want a solo, but I didn't want to be rude to her. So I said yes. I assured myself that too many girls tried out for me to get one. Sure enough, the next day, who got the solo? Take a wild guess. Me. The notes were too high and nothing would come out for the first two words. I also couldn't find places to breathe, so the words fell short. I was so nervous, I was literally shaking the first time I had to sing alone. Then, as the concert neared, we practiced in the auditorium and I sang into the microphone. I was sure I could hear the other girls' hurtful snickers behind me, but then I just told myself, "Who cares what they think?" After that, I felt a lot better and definitely less nervous. That solo was one big step up for me. I know am not as afraid (I'll admit that I'm still a little bit nervous) to sing in front of other people.



I knew I had it in me, but had never  
gotten over my fear. Now I have, and guess  
what? It feels really good.

## Score Point: 5

This engaging response concerns a student overcoming a fear of singing in front of an audience. The content is clear and focused on explaining the fear and apprehension the writer felt while auditioning for parts (thoughts of hearing other girls' hurtful snickers), and ultimately conquering her fear. A competent command of language, as well as a consistent tone, helps move the reader through the text.

One day I was bored, so I decided to try to find something to do. I was looking around my room when I noticed my electric sitting in the corner, next to my amplifier. Shining and glowing in the corner as if I should play it. So I got up off my bed picked up my guitar and started to strum. Slowly I started looking through cords in a booklet that came with the guitar. As I started to memorize them and then played a C cord it sounded terrible. Then suddenly I remembered I never tuned it.

I found my electric tuner, that I had got for my birthday a month earlier. I plugged the dark black cord into the tuner then the guitar. When I turned it on the bright flashing green and red colors radiantly lit up the room in which it was dark out. I twisted the smooth silver knob to make the first string sound higher and lower, sharper and flatter. When I plucked the string the tuner lit up which note I was playing and if it was too sharp or too flat. The sensation was wonderful when I plucked and tuned each string, and with each pluck of a string the lights radiantly and brilliantly lit up every corner of the dark room. With each string tuned a greater more wonderful feeling built up inside me. until I was finished did I know the

Sound and magnificence of a wonderfully tuned guitar, bright red and silver shining brightly in the dim light of a duly lit messy floor of a messy room.

Next I started back to playing cords. The sound, the sound was so intense. It was beautiful. Like a rose, a rose in the bright sun of a summer day. Bright red in the sunlight almost glowing in its own radiance. Then as soon as I played the first cord, "G" did I actually know how great knowing and being able to play such an instrument ~~or~~ a guitar. Slowly but steadily I started to learn each cord. Then it came to me, play the cords in a kind of pattern. Then with the patterns put words & with the words came songs, which the songs came music. Music wonderful music. You don't really understand the true meaning of music until you've played and understood how much time and effort it takes to be able to true music. Your own music, it takes days months even years to play a song put words to it and understand it. But once you truly, truly understand it the music will be awesome.

I think the time and effort put into learning how to use and play an instrument or other thing is what truly makes you good at it. If you

do it take your time to understand the thing and put your mind to it when you first play an instrument or paint or draw or something like that it won't work or sound terrible. It has taken me two years of trying to learn every thing about a guitar and the cords. I am 13 years old and I'm still learning stuff. Learning this probably would have took less time if I hadn't made the mistake of not really sticking to playing the guitar, but when I really started practicing It was awesome playing the guitar.

So what I've been saying is don't give up on things. You might just enjoy playing some instrument sitting in the corner of your room, shiny glowing waiting for you to play it and open its true potential and beauty. It can happen it did to me!

### Score Point: 5

This engaging response explains how the writer gained a true appreciation for music by tuning a rarely used guitar. The organizational structure naturally transitions from being bored and picking up a guitar, to plucking the strings to get the correct tone, to finally making wonderful music. Word choice and command of language offer thoughtful understanding and prove the writer's point regarding not giving up on things. Better development of one or more examples would be needed to achieve a higher score.

USE BLUE INK, BLACK INK, OR NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY.

1 1 1 1

- PART 1 -

1 1 1 1

Write your final response to DEVELOPING STRENGTHS AND TALENTS here. No additional sheets may be used.

"7, 8, 9, 10," I weezed as I shoved the barbell into place. Football season is right around the corner I kept telling myself. It was a muggy July day as I did my weekly exercises in preperation for football. I just finished lifting weights and it was time for my jog. I could see the quivering waves of heat at the far end of the field as I jogged around the outer edge. People had always told me I had a Knack for football, but I wanted to get even better. I knew it would take a lot of work though. My forehead was beaded with sweat and my tongue felt like a cotton ball. I

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

rested in the empty bleachers, but I knew that in about two months, they would be filled with screaming fans. That will be the day. I thought to myself, when all this work pays off.

My summers always consist of training for football season, but I wanted to make this one special. I had already gone to many camps trying to improve my speed and agility. In the beginning of the summer I had a forty yard dash time of 6.1 seconds. Midway through the summer I bumped it down to a 5.6. So I knew I was getting faster. I was also hoping for my strength to improve.

At the cottage we own on Lake Michigan, I would run in the mushy sand to help my balance. Also I ran up and down the sand banks. I tried to eat a lot but not junk food. I wanted to pack on a few extra pounds before summer's end. As I ran along the lake front I saw green trees on one side, and the deep blue water on the other side. I knew this was the best place to train.

I also would play catch on the beach with my dad. "Go long!" he would scream. I kicked little bits of sand up as I pumped my arms and legs, sprinting as fast as I could. I saw the spiraling ball in front of me and all of a sudden, SPLASH, I was in the lake. I somehow managed to hang on to the ball. This will be a great season I thought to myself as I shook my hair out like a dog.

When I came back to town in the middle of August I had one last football camp before the start

of the season. I sprinted at full speed through all the drills and got through them with relative ease. I looked around and everyone else was breathing heavily with their hands on their knees. All that training over the summer was helping. I even got a compliment from the head football coach of the varsity team, who was there. I went home glowing with pride that day.

After camp I still exercised for the last few days before the season. When tryouts came my heart was beating out of my chest with excitement. This is the day, I thought to myself, when all my training pays off.

**Score Point: 5**

This response details the writer's preparation for his upcoming football season. The content is clear and focused, explaining his summer filled with weekly exercise, training by Lake Michigan, and football camp. A mature command of language (quivering waves of heat, shook my hair out like a dog) and precise word choice (knack, spiraling) enhance the overall effectiveness of the response. More developed connections would be needed for a score of "6".

Write your final response here.

I never thought I would be good at drawing anything. My mother was a perfect artist. When I was little, she worked at the . There she did bronze casted sculptures. I would watch her at work with a block of wax, carving out the beautiful form of a human body. I admired her work, but with unmistakable determination to match her talents. But I was only a small child. My best drawings were crude and childish. Unlike the intense detail and meaning of my mother's work. I urged my mom to give me a little art lesson when I was five or six. She showed me a picture book with bright pictures of animals. I was inspired by a little electric blue chameleon sitting in a tree on one of the pages. I wanted to try to draw it. The result was a pathetically minuscule, distorted chameleon, colored messily so that the colors escaped the edges of the drawing. But I want to keep on trying. I painted, and I doodled, and I colored. I drew at school everyday. When I had gotten into fourth grade, I began to attempt drawing anime style. I was slightly jealous of my friend, A who could—at the time—draw people better than me. So I wanted to draw people. I began to draw anime-style people that I found myself being inspired by in my brother's comic books and graphic novels. The pictures of the people I drew looked good to me when I was in the fourth grade. But now as I look at the pictures I shudder and wonder how I could have thought such a thing. The head looked like a turnip, and the body was small and boxy. The hands were just circles, the eyes were overlarge and eerie, the nose was a minuscule spiked line, and the hair was

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spiky and pressed flat on the huge head. It had an overall stiff look to it. The pictures looked so ridiculous that they hardly looked human. But there was one thing I was particularly good at drawing, even when I was little - cats. Oh, I could draw tons of cats, and I draw them pretty good for my age. When I was little, a black cat came to our doorstep on a cold New Year's eve. We ~~couldn't~~ just leave him outside. We let the stray inside and fed him some leftovers and milk. No one ever claimed him, so we kept him. We named him \_\_\_\_\_, after \_\_\_\_\_, a famous artist from the 1600s. I drew him in all positions. I used him for a model. He accepted the job, as it didn't require anything but lounging around to please the girl with the pencil and paper. So I drew cats, and I drew lots of dragons in the fourth grade as well. I got my dragons from a large book of dragons my father had lent to me. Oriental dragons were my favorite to draw. Soon I had another inspiration. In the same year, my mother and I brought a puppy home. A German Shepherd and Chow-Chow mix. We named him \_\_\_\_\_ after a mischievous spirit and an old movie with an invisible six foot tall rabbit \_\_\_\_\_. I had great difficulty drawing him as a puppy, but as he grew and his features became more rounded out, I could draw him. I drew his large nose, his semi-erect, floppy ears, his round eyes. My drawings seemed to evolve greatly over time. The style became different and more intricate. The pictures I drew became more of a unique style that only I did. As I continued to learn and draw, my abilities skyrocketed. My people became more advanced than Albin's ever were. I drew in school everyday. I would just keep

IF YOU NEED MORE SPACE, CONTINUE ON THE NEXT PAGE.

on doodling on every scrap of blank paper I could find. I drew absentmindedly while I was doing completely different activities. I drew with my eyes closed. My hands, my heart, and my mind are almost always drawing. If I got a good idea, I would be itching to illustrate it. Today, my drawings have proceeded to an adult level. My imagination and intricate details are expressed on paper like no other. I am proud of my art. Perhaps someday, as my Native American fourth grade teacher predicted, people would be reading books written and illustrated in my name. I love to draw, it expresses my true feelings, and it expresses me myself. My abilities change a little everyday. People can look at my best work for quite some time. I will always draw, hands or no hands. For they, my creations, the offspring of my imagination, have become truly pleasing to the eye.

**Score Point: 6**

This response offers an exceptionally engaging look at how the writer developed her artistic talents over time. The content is thoroughly developed with details and example to explain the writer's love of drawing. The word choice here is appropriate and captures the emotion the writer feels for her talent.

USE BLUE INK, BLACK INK, OR NO. 2 PENCIL ONLY.

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- PART 1 -

1 1 1 1

Write your final response to DEVELOPING STRENGTHS AND TALENTS here. No additional sheets may be used.

B knew that he was the dumbest kid in seventh grade. He was not at all good at sports. In soccer he tripped over his own feet, in hockey he always ran into people, and in basketball he was never able to shoot without having the ball snatched out of his hands, that is, if he did not drop the ball first out of pure fright. In music he did not do much better. He couldn't even squeak out "Hot Cross Buns" on the recorder, and he had never been much of a singer. Academics did not treat B well either, because he was in both remedial math and spelling classes, as well as having private tutoring at home. His tutor had even turned up for lessons during the summer! To sum things up in a nutshell, B was, as he thought, a failure. To make matters worse, B wasn't the only one

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who believed that he was a complete washout. The fact of the matter was that everyone in his school, church, and even his tutor thought that B was just an overweight, stupid, clumsy, stuttering, and miserable thirteen year old kid.

Since B had no friends of any sort, he had a way of spending his free time that might be of some interest to you, since it is a hobby that is not usually seen done often now days, especially by thirteen year old losers. B liked to create what he called Historic Battles Containing Fictional Characters, which was a long, and in my opinion, unnessesary, way of saying: "B likes to act out wars that happened a long time ago." The way that B did this was by a very precise system he had invented when he was six. B would spend hours making a tiny model of a person, hardly bigger than a thumb. He would invent a name the figure, as well as creating its family history, its family, its beliefs, its hopes, its achievements, and its strengths and weaknesses. Throughout the years, B had made exactly two hundred and forty-one miniture people, not to mention the three that had been buried in some strange place by his dog Midge. B had also made thirty-four sets of places his tiny ones could possibly be. After the complex process of producing all of his characters and scenery, then would come the real fun. B would begin stratigize. He made plans of who was going to attack, how they were going to attack, who they would attack, and who would be where when the attack happened. Sometimes one side's strategy would work out better, and they would win, and sometimes it was vice-versa. However, there was really never one side that always came out on top.

I could go on and on about B's own complex world that he has all to himself, but that would take too long to even imagine, and I confess that not even I know everything about it. For do not we all have some small place in the back of our mind all to ourself that not even the most qualified psychologist of the age could know all the secrets and fantasys

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contained there?

Now **B** had an uncle who lived forty-three miles out of town. He owned a huge house full of many mysterious closets, ~~trapdoors~~, and strange rooms. **B** loved spending time at his uncle's house, exploring and talking to his uncle for hours.

**B** was spending one such occasion with his uncle in September, and as he was looking through a dark and dusty attic he came across an old box, with his uncle's name carved neatly in the front of it. **B** brought the box to his uncle, and asked him what it was for. "This my boy," his uncle said proudly, "Is a chess board."

"Chess?" **B** thought. He had never heard of a game called chess before. But yes, he remembered now. Chess. A vague memory of a checkered board with wooden pieces moving on it slowly came back to **B**. Chess. **B** asked his uncle to show him how to play, and sure enough, the game came back to **B** as clearly as the sun coming out on a gray winters day. Chess.

"Want to play?" It was three weeks later, and one of **B**'s schoolmates held up a chessboard. "I bet I can beat you," **T** (the boy) said again. **B**'s hands shook, but he managed to stammer, "yeah, o.k." **T** sneered again, and the game began. As the game progressed, **B**'s mind was wizzing like no one's has before, even Thomas Edison's. "It's just another war scene," he said to himself, "That's all, and nothing else." Forty-five minutes later, **B**'s voice said in a surprisingly confident voice, "Checkmate."

I guess you can pretty much figure out what happened after this. No, **B** didn't become a world class championship chess

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player, but he did find a new assurance in himself, a confidence he had never known before in his life. He was good at something. Sure, maybe he was still a klutz in sports, maybe he still was not very smart in school, maybe he was still overweight, maybe his clothes still were out of style, but he could win at chess.

"Chess..." B muttered as he fell asleep one night, "I'm good at chess..."

Everyone is good at something, everyone has some sort of talent, everyone has a strength hidden inside them someplace, all they have to do is find it.

### Score point: 6

This response has an exceptionally engaging and clear focus on a boy who thought he was a "failure", but ultimately discovers that "everyone has a strength hidden inside them." Ideas and content are thoroughly developed with relevant details and examples illustrating the boy's ineptitude but eventual confidence due to his skill in chess. Organization and connections between ideas are well controlled, moving the reader smoothly and naturally through the text. A mature command of language, and precise word choice, result in a compelling piece of writing.